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MY FELLOW-TRAVELLER AND I.

To say merely that 'it rained,' does not usually describe the state of the weather. There may have been wind at the same time, and the rain may have been a compliment splashed against your face or window; or it may have been bitterly cold, and the rain may have counted only as an additional discomfort. But on the day I have before my memory, it rained and did nothing else. There was neither cold nor warmth enough to divert your feelings; there was no breath of air to disturb the perpendicularity of the drops; and no prospect of country you could see through them. Down came the heavy globules in mathematical lines; splash went the water against the level road; round went the wheels of the vehicle with a monotonous rumble; and away bowled we over the wet, steaming, endless plains of the Netherlands.

There was only one passenger with me in the coupée, and he was worse than nobody by several chalks. Solitude would have been endurable; but to be shut up in compulsory companionship with a man whose language you cannot speak, and who cannot speak yours, is dreadful. I saw the fellow was a Frenchman the moment I set eyes on him, and the cool easy impudence with which he said '*Pardon!*' when he knocked my hat from the seat on coming in, confirmed the fact. My knowledge of French had been acquired at school, and went only as far as reading; and I could not yet refrain from an insular blush when I was obliged to try to wreak my thought upon expression. This individual, however, roused me. I looked upon him somehow as an unauthorised intruder; and it was with a reckless air I made a remark to him in his own language about the weather—just to shew him that I could speak French if I chose, and didn't care a snap of my fingers whether it was good or bad. I think I said '*Quelle pluie!*' I encountered his eyes, however, at the moment, and a quiet smile, as he muttered '*Mauvais temps!*' demolished me. I had fallen, doubtless, into some unhappy cacology; and we both looked out of the window at the rain—I to conceal my confusion, and he, of course, to conceal a sneer, with all the distressing politeness of his countrymen.

A situation of this kind is the more embarrassing that one feels obliged to say something. Here was a man, a well-dressed, respectable, nay rather a gentlemanly person, with intelligent eyes that seemed to understand me; and to sit alone with him, hour after hour, all day and all night, without opening my lips, was impossible. He felt this himself—I was sure he did; for whenever I made an attempt, he listened earnestly, as if anxious to make out what I would be

at, without troubling me to repeat, and then replied in few words, as if unwilling to exhibit any colloquial superiority. I at last began to like the fellow, and to be more and more sorry and ashamed that I was unable to converse with him. Sometimes he took the initiative himself; and when I could not exactly catch his meaning, always kindly and laboriously repeated what he had said, occasionally varying the expression to make it more clear.

Down came the rain in the meantime, with its steady, determined, mathematical motion—'quick as lightning, but never in a hurry,' as the drill-sergeant says—down, down, down—splash, splash, splash—rumble, rumble, rumble: it was enough to make one mad. The Frenchman gave a heavy sigh, and I echoed it; he got up a half-melancholy, half-comical smile, which I reflected; he shook his head, so did I. 'Slow work this!' I would have said, only it would have been absurd in French; and he looked as if he would fain have given me the idiom, if I could but have understood it. At length the vehicle stopped to take in a passenger. Here was a chance. The new-comer was a plump, portly, handsome dame, who insinuated herself between my friend and me, and then expanded till, what with her and the cushions, we felt uncommonly comfortable. But she was a German; and when she had recovered breath, she looked first in the face of one, then of the other, and with an alarming sound of ugh—agh—ogh, delivered in the interrogative key, appeared to be endeavouring to fish out of us whether we could do anything in that line. The Frenchman said, '*Je suis fâché*;' and '*N'entends pas*,' and I shook my head in despair; negatives that only excited the risible faculties of madame, who went on clearing her throat of its German in the midst of explosions of laughter, that made our contiguous sides and the cushions undulate in harmony. I verily think she considered herself fortunately placed in having two listeners with no speaker but herself, for she rattled away without intermission, interlarding her speech, in compliment to the Frenchman, with scraps of his own language, so horribly bad that even I was amused. We stood it for some time as decently as possible; but at last I could not help giving my male companion the wink, and saying in an under-tone: '*Quelle Française!*' Both of us proved too many for his politeness: off he set with a roar, in which I joined from sympathy; and so we went on all three, talking French and German, without listening to either, and laughing ready to die.

A more interesting episode, however, speedily occurred, for the coach stopped to a late dinner. Meals were a grand invention for that kind of travelling, although they have now gone the way of all horseflesh.

To snatch at a morsel as we do now, and devour it like an ogre, is not to dine; any more than to scald the mucous membrane all the way down is to get cheered with the cup that not inebriates. The recollection of that dinner is enough to disgust one with steam and its headlong haste, and make us inquire whether it is really the grand business of human beings to contrive so as to be nowhere at all at any given time. The bill of fare included scores of dishes, in soup, fish, meat, poultry, game, pastry, and confections; all with names that made them ten times more luxurious, yet, I must own, so unintelligible, that choice was out of the question. I thought of shutting my eyes, and taking something at random; but a qualm came over me as I reflected on the stories I had heard of the continental cuisine including frogs, snails, and the ox's liver called vulgarly in England cat's meat. I looked at my Frenchman; but he was looking at me. He would not have begun before me for the world; and when, in hungry impatience, I grasped at something, that turned out to be overdone boiled beef under the name of bouilli, so far from staring at me with the contempt I perhaps deserved, he helped himself largely to the humble fare. Eating, they say, wants only a beginning. My next venture was upon *bitik au naturel*, then upon *côtelettes de mouton*, and then upon the *gigot*, which always comes last. The Frenchman, though looking with the eye of a connoisseur upon the tempting dishes around him, was true to his social principles, and followed rigidly the tastes, extraordinary as he might think them, of his fellow-traveller—so that, in the midst of all sorts of delicacies, we made a magnificent meal upon boiled beef and beef-steaks, mutton chops and leg of mutton.

After all, it was very satisfactory. We felt ourselves expanding, like the German lady—who had now vanished, for she resided at the place; and we looked at each other with increasing kindness and good-humour. Suddenly the Frenchman filled his tumbler half full of wine, and held it out. '*A votre santé!*' cried he, and in an instant I was ready for him, and brought my glass against his with, I regret to say, a fatal collision, for it smashed it in pieces and spilt the wine. I was bitterly ashamed of my awkwardness. It was the first time I had practised this fashion, which they call *trinquer*, and should have been more cautious; but the conduct of my companion was very admirable. He actually seemed to take it all upon himself, begging my pardon in the humblest manner for the outrage I had committed, in demolishing a man's glass, who had merely invited me in a friendly way to take wine with him. The worst of it was, the waiters and the other guests were excessively impudent; not that they said anything—they never do on such occasions; but they looked at each other, and then bit their lips, and grinned horribly to repress a smile. As for the hostess, who had been looking at us a good deal, she covered her face with her handkerchief and precipitately left the bar. Both the Frenchman and I were much annoyed, and looked jealously from face to face to watch for an occasion of hostilities; but by degrees the thing was forgotten, and a capital glass of brandy-and-water made us all right. I thought, by the way, that my companion would have taken the alcohol neat, for I had known his countrymen express great disgust at our weak warm mixture: but he was a trump throughout, and no mistake.

Our attempts at conversation while we were at table were very few, for I did not like to expose my slight acquaintance with the language before a mixed company; but when we were fairly reseated in the *coupée*, after a plentiful dinner and a reasonable allowance of wine and brandy, we went at it again with a will. On such occasions, one has a full, comfortable, jolly feeling, which overthrows the barriers of reserve; and for my own part I talked away as if I was a Frenchman born;

only a good deal out in the grammar, and idiom, and meaning of words. My companion was equally communicative, and although he took great pains with my ignorance, but little more intelligible; and so we kept hammering at one another during a great part of the night with less success than our perseverance deserved.

Even after I fell asleep, the same thing was continued for hours in my dreams. I thought I was speaking against the Frenchman for a wager of a tumbler of wine; when the contest was over, we each claimed to be the winner; and while struggling for the prize, the glass smashed in our hands, and the liquid descended over the whole earth in great, round, perpendicular drops. Whereupon I awoke. It was the sound of the rain that was in my ears, mingled with other noises—down, down, down—splash, splash, splash—rumble, rumble, rumble. Presently the coach stopped: we had arrived at the town where I was to lose my companion.

He was no more than in time for the vehicle by which he was to turn off into another route; and when I stood to see him mount, holding my umbrella over his head, it was with real emotion I bade him farewell. I could not help thinking at the moment what a pleasant time we might have passed, and what a permanent friendship we might have formed, had we only understood one another's language well enough to converse freely. I thought no more of my ps and qs in French speaking, but wringing him by the hand, bade him adieu in my own language.

'Good-by,' said I; 'God bless you!'

'What!' cried he, in the same tongue, 'are you an Englishman?'

'To be sure! and you! O Jupiter—Jovis—Jovi—Jovem—Jupiter—Jove!'

'Montez, monsieur, montez!' shouted the coachman.

'What a terrible mistake! But you speak the language so admirably!'

'I!—I never tried it till a few days ago, while you seemed an old experienced Frenchman—quite a!'

'Montez, montez! Sacré!—nous sommes partis! Ye—e—e!'

We bundled him in while the vehicle was actually in motion, and I saw no more of my travelling companion.

THINGS AS THEY ARE IN AMERICA.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

LIMITED as had been my excursion and opportunities of observation, the broad fact was sufficiently impressed on my mind, that the people of England know but little of America, while that little is disfigured by certain prejudices and misapprehensions. Travellers have, for the most part, dealt so unkindly by the Americans, that I was unprepared for much that came in my way of a nature that can be spoken of only with respect. Their energetic industry, perseverance, and enterprise; the tastefulness of their dwellings, and (with one unfortunate exception) the cleanliness and good government of their cities; their patriotism and independence of sentiment; their temperance; their respect for women; their systems of popular education; their free and untaxed press; their spontaneous yet ample support of the ordinances of religion,*

* In 1850, there were in the United States 36,011 churches, with an aggregate accommodation for 13,949,826 persons; and the total value of church property was \$6,416,639 dollars. The Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians, were the most numerous bodies. As regards education: in 1850, nearly 4,000,000 of young persons were receiving instruction in the various educational institutions of the country, or at the rate of 1 in every 5 free persons; the teachers numbered more than 115,000; and the colleges and schools nearly 100,000—their support being chiefly from legally imposed rates.

as well as of every variety of beneficiary institution—all seemed to me to merit commendation, and to over-balance greatly such imperfections as have been fastened upon and exaggerated in the descriptions presented by tourists.

Undeniably, the personal manners of the Americans do not, in general, come up to the standard established in England. In ordinary circumstances, we miss some of the more polite observances of Europe; but the blank does not represent an unmitigated loss. We are not encumbered with the formalities of an inexorable etiquette; nor do we see that stiffness of manner in the general intercourse between class and class, which is stamped on English society. The hauteur of rank is totally unknown, nor would it be tolerated. In the absence of hereditary honours, opulence and refinement create distinctions; but these are simply respected, not worshipped. We all know, of course, that ordinary politeness, or graciousness of manner, is a different thing from servility; and there can be little doubt that, as America grows older, and competition becomes more intense, a proper perception of this not unimportant truth will be more widely spread and acted on.

If the less-cultivated Americans be as yet faulty in this respect, their shortcomings are obviously traceable to the great breadth of field over which they exercise a command. Happy in not being cribbed and confined within a town, or even a spacious district, they can choose their locality over more than thirty states; and if one place does not come up to expectations, they can resort to another. Neither do they feel themselves indissolubly tied to any particular profession. I was frequently assured that no man in the States is damaged by a change from one line of industry to another. Every trade is open to everybody; and as, from the general diffusion of education, every one is prepared to do his duty creditably, he is presumed to be able to turn his hand to almost anything. Hence, the restlessness of the American character. Attachment to locality is scarcely known; and shifting from place to place, a thousand miles at a stretch, with a view to bettering the condition, seems to be an ordinary occurrence. There is, in fact, an immense internal migration. New England is continually throwing off swarms towards the newly opened territories and states in the far West; the latest manifestation of this kind being the movement of a colony of settlers from Massachusetts to the newly organised state of Nebraska.

The abundance of all material comforts, may perhaps be mentioned as a cause of the occasionally rude, independent bearing which falls under notice. No such indication of fulness exists in England. Straitened in circumstances, and burdened with taxation, but with a conventional necessity for keeping up appearances, a large proportion of our middle classes require to be exceedingly frugal in the consumption of articles of domestic use. A person accustomed to shifts of this nature, is astonished at the profusion at table in all quarters of America. There is, at least, no stinting as to food. It was often pressed on my notice, that the hired labourers in the fields are provided with better fare than falls to the lot of thousands of the 'genteel' classes in England.

In no part of America did I see any beggars or ragged vagrants; and except in New York, the condition of which is exceedingly anomalous, I did not observe any drunkenness—there having been, as I understood, a great reform in this particular. I should say that, independently of the 'Maine Law,' public opinion on the subject of drinking-usages is considerably in advance of that of England. My belief, however, is, that owing to peculiarities of climate, there is less desire to partake of stimulants, and less immunity from the consequences of an excessive use of them, than in the humid atmosphere of northern Europe.

Other things struck me favourably. I observed that all classes were well dressed. My attention was called to the fact, that when operatives had finished the labours of the day, they generally changed their garments, and were as neatly attired as those in higher stations. It was also observable that mechanics, in good employment, occupy better houses, pay higher rents, and dress their wives and families better, than is usual in England or Scotland; that they, in short, aim at living in greater respectability; and in doing so, necessarily avoid such indulgences as would improperly absorb their means. It was agreeable to note, that the English language is everywhere spoken well. I heard no *patois*, no local dialect. The tone of speech was uniform, though more nasal in some parts of New England than in other places.

In forming an opinion of a country, much depends on the point from which it is viewed. The point of view for America, as it appears to me, is America itself. To look at it with English eyes and English expectations, is surely unwise. Hopeless would it be for any one fresh from the Old Country to look for magnificent gentlemen's seats, fine lawns, beautiful hedges, admirable roads, superb carriages, old-settled usages and institutions, and that artificiality of manner which in England has required a thousand years to mature. We must take America as it is, and make the best of it. It is a new, and, as yet, not fully settled country; and, all things considered, has done wonders during its short progress. No one can forget that, except in the case of Virginia, and one or two other places, it has been peopled by the more humble, or, at all events, struggling classes of European society. The aristocracy of England have shrunk from it. Instead of acting as leaders, and becoming the heroes of a new world, they have left the high honour of founding communities throughout America to groups of miscellaneous individuals, who at least possessed the spirit to cross the Atlantic in quest of fortune, rather than sink into pauperism at home.

The proper aspect, therefore, in which to view America, is that of a field for the reception of emigrants. It was thus I beheld it; and from all that came under my notice, I am bound to recommend it as a new home to all whose hearts and hands are disposed to labour, and who, for the sake of future prospects, as regards themselves and families, are willing to make a present sacrifice. To all classes of married manual labourers, the United States and Canada offer a peculiarly attractive field; not so much so, however, from the higher rates of remuneration, as the many opportunities for advantageously making investments, and by that means greatly improving their circumstances. This, indeed, is the only point worth pressing on notice. In England, the operative having scarcely any means of disposing of small savings to advantage—the interest of the savings-bank forming no adequate temptation—he rarely economises, but recklessly spends all his earnings, of whatever amount, on present indulgences. It is vain, I fear, to try to convince him of this folly. Practically, he is without hope; and, uninstructed, he does not reflect on consequences. In America, on the contrary, everything contributes to excite his higher emotions. The sentiment of hope is stimulated in an extraordinary degree. In the more newly settled cities and townships, so many bargains may be had of small portions of land, which may probably, in a year or two hence, be sold for many times the original cost, that there is the greatest possible reason for economising and becoming capitalists. The saved twenty dollars of to-day may, by a judicious investment, be shortly a hundred, nay, a thousand, dollars; so that, with a reasonable degree of prudence, a person in humble circumstances rises by rapid and sure strides to fortune.

I feel assured that this tends to explain the superior

character of the American workman. In coming down Lake St Clair in a steamer, there was on board a Canadian settler, who had some years ago left Scotland, and was now in the enjoyment of a pleasant and thriving farm on the banks of the lake. On conversing with him respecting his affairs, he told me that all the time he was in the Old Country, he never felt any inducement to save; for it was a dreary thing to look forward to the accumulation of a shilling or two a week, with no prospect of trading on the amount, and only at the end of his days having a few pounds in the savings-bank. 'But here,' said he, 'with a saving of two dollars we can buy an acre of land, and may, perhaps, sell it again afterwards for ten dollars; and this kind of thing makes us all very careful.' Did not this man's explanation solve the problem which now engages the attention of writers on social economy? Did it not go far towards elucidating the cause of so much of our intemperance—the absence of hope? The native American, however, possesses advantages over the immigrant. With intelligence sharpened by education, he is better able to take advantage of all available means of improvement in his condition; the press rouses him with its daily stimulus; the law interposes no impediment of taxes and embarrassing forms on the transfer of property; the constitution offers him the prospect of rising to a position of public confidence; no overshadowing influence weighs on his spirits; he is socially and politically free; his whole feelings, from boyhood, have been those of a responsible and self-reliant being, who has had much to gain by the exercise of discretion.

If I may use the expression, there is a *spontaneity* in well-doing in America. In the circumstances just referred to, men conduct themselves properly, because it is natural for them to do so; and from the aspect of the American operative-classes, I am disposed to think they would feel affronted in being made objects of special solicitude by those in a more affluent condition. To speak plainly, why should one class of persons in a community require constantly to have the thinking done for them by another class? I am afraid, that wherever such appears necessary, as in England, there is something socially defective. The whole tendency of institutional arrangements in America, as has been shewn, is to evoke feelings of self-reliance. A contrary tendency still prevails to a large extent in Great Britain, where, from causes which it is unnecessary to recapitulate, the humbler classes require to be ministered to and thought for, as if they were children. We must contrive means for amusing them, and keeping them out of mischief; call meetings to get up reading-rooms, baths, wash-houses, and temperance coffee-houses for them; offer prizes to those among them who will keep the neatest houses and gardens; and in so many ways busy ourselves about them, that at length it would seem as if it were the duty of one half the community to think for the other. The spectacle of well-educated, thoughtful, independent America, enabled me to see through the fallacy of first disabling a man from thinking and acting for himself, and then trying to fortify him by a system of well-meant, but really enervating patronage. It is something to have to say of the United States, that the mechanics and rural labourers of that country do not require to be patronised.

The persons in America who seemed to me to merit compassion most, were not the poor, for of these there are not many, except in a few large cities: those who are to be pitied, are the rich. Obtaining wealth by a course of successful industry, it would appear as if there were no other means of spending it than in rearing splendid mansions, and furnishing them in a style of Oriental luxury, and thereafter living in gorgeous magnificence, like the prince-merchants of Genoa in the past times of Italian glory. So far as

the actual founders of fortunes are concerned, there is, perhaps, little to discommend in all this; but it was disagreeably pressed on my notice, that the sons of these millionaires, born to do nothing but to live on their father's earnings, were much to be pitied. In New York, they were seen lounging about idly in the parlours and bar-rooms of the hotels, worn out with dissipation, and the nightly victims of gambling-houses, of which there are a number in Broadway on a scale of matchless splendour. Among the vices they have lately thought fit to introduce, is the practice, now obsolete in England, of encouraging professional pugilism, the exercise of which occasionally leads to serious affrays. In Great Britain, as we all know, a considerable part of the fortunes realised in trade is expended in the purchase of land, and in effecting rural improvements of various kinds; the country, by such means, becoming a useful engine of depletion to the town; but in America, land conveys no honour, and is not bought except as a temporary investment, or as a source of livelihood. Wealthy men, therefore, would have nothing to look for in rural life beyond the pleasure of a villa; so far as I could learn, they do not even go that length, but consume their means, for the most part, in the more seductive but not very refining enjoyments of the city. With few exceptions, therefore, families of any note do not continue in affluence more than one or two generations. An 'old family' in America, must ever be a kind of miracle. The principle which seems to be laid down is, that family distinction is adverse to democratic institutions; and that, consequently, each generation ought to be left to shift for itself—a philosophic rule, no doubt, but which, like many other good maxims, is not without practical difficulties.

Leaving the wealthier classes of New York to discover, if they can, what is the use of money after they have made it, it is more to my purpose to call attention to the advantages which America presents as an outlet for the redundant and partially impoverished classes of the United Kingdom. When I reflect on the condition of the rural labourers in many parts of Great Britain and Ireland—the poorness of their living; their generally wretched dwellings; the little pains taken to afford them an education calculated to excite their better feelings; their blank prospects as to old age; and when I consider that, within a short distance, there is a country inviting their settlement, where they can scarcely fail to attain a position of comfort and respectability, I am surprised that the 'exodus,' great as it is, is not many times greater—in fact, the astonishing thing, as it appears to me, is, how under present circumstances any at all remain.*

Perhaps part of the reluctance to remove to America is due to fears on the score of health. Peculiar in some respects, the climate of those northern and middle regions to which emigrants usually direct their course, need not, however, be the subject of apprehension. The most remarkable peculiarity of the air, as has been already hinted, is its dryness. The prevailing westerly winds, coming over thousands of miles of land, lose their moisture before reaching the more settled regions in the east, and are felt to be thin and desiccating. Except in swampy districts, damp in any form is unknown, moisture being almost immediately absorbed. Newly plastered houses are dry enough to be inhabited a day or two after being finished. Clothes put out to

* On the day on which this was written, I saw, seated on the ground by the side of a road in Scotland, a party of ploughmen and female field-workers taking their mid-day refreshment, which consisted solely of coarse bannocks of pease-meal, milk drank from a bottle, and morsels of meagre cheese. Could I avoid drawing a comparison between this hard lot, and that of the well-paid and well-provisioned labourers in Nova Scotia, Canada, and the United States?

dry, need to hang but a short time. In writing, I observed that the ink dried in half the time it would have required to do so in England. That such properties in the atmosphere have an injurious effect on the constitution, is more than probable; at least, I observed that the people generally were less florid in complexion, and less robust, than the English. At the same time, it was my conviction, especially as regards females, that much more injury is done to health in Canada and the States by the overheating of apartments with stoves, than by the aridity of the atmosphere. From statistical inquiry, it does not, however, appear that life is to any appreciable degree less valuable in the northern and middle parts of the States than it is in England—the damage which may be done by the dryness of the air and the extremes of temperature being, as it were, balanced by the unwholesome influences of our atmospheric humidity. Settlers in Canada, with whom I conversed on the subject, gave the preference to the American climate, on account not only of its pleasantly exhilarating properties, but of its equable character. It is proper to say, that there may be some danger in proceeding to America during the extreme heats of summer; and I would, on this account, recommend travellers not to quit England before August, from which time till December the weather is temperate and agreeable. Crossing the Atlantic in spring, during the prevalence of icebergs, is particularly to be avoided.

Fears have been sometimes entertained, that the constant influx of a large and generally uninstructed class of foreigners, more particularly Irish, must have a tendency to disorganise the institutional arrangements of the States, and even lower the tone of society. Great, however, as is the flood of immigrants, not of the most enlightened kind, it does not appear that they exercise any deteriorating influences, or are in any respect troublesome, except in New York and other large seats of population. Scattering themselves over the country, they are, for the most part, lost in the general community, and soon acquire the sentiments of self-respect common to the American character. The change is remarkable in the case of the Irish. Attaching themselves to such employments as, without risk, bring in small sums of ready money, they are found to be a saving and most useful class of people, with tastes and aspirations considerably different from those they formerly possessed. Altering so far, they may almost be said to be more Americanised than the Americans; for they signalise themselves by saying hard things of the Old Country, and if not the most inveterate, are, at least, the most noisy of its enemies. In the second generation, however—thanks to the universal system of education—the Irishman has disappeared. Associating in and out of school with the shrewd native youth—laughed, if not instructed, out of prejudices—the children of Irish descent have generally lost the distinctive marks of their origin.

It is a curious proof of the permanency usually given to any idea, true or false, by popular literature, that well-informed persons in this country are still occasionally heard scoffing at Pennsylvania on account of her repudiated bonds. We all remember the effect of the half-whimsical complaints of the Rev. Sidney Smith on this subject. We join in the laugh, sneer at the Pennsylvanians; and so it goes on. All the time, it is an absolute fiction that this state ever repudiated her debts. She did, indeed, at a moment of singular pecuniary difficulty, affecting the whole nation, suspend payment of the interest of her bonds. The country having been so far drained of money, that barter had to be resorted to, it was simply impossible for the state to pay the interest on these debts; but the debts were always acknowledged, and as soon as possible payment of the interest was resumed. No one ever lost a penny by Pennsylvania. There are, indeed, I believe, some states in the west and south which did for a time

repudiate; and even the most temporary exemplification of such a system must be deplored, for the effect it could not but have in shaking the general faith in American state probity. It is at the same time true, that great as is the traffic between England and America,* we hear no complaints against the uprightness of the merchants of the latter country. It appears from official inquiry, that, independently of debts suspended by the defaulting states, the amount lent by foreigners on bonds and other securities to America is, at the lowest calculation, £40,000,000; and the interest on this debt is, so far as I am aware, always duly paid.

A question constantly arises, in looking at the political fabric of the United States: 'Will it last—does it not contain within itself the germs of dissolution?' In offering a few observations in reply, it will be necessary to touch upon what is admitted to be the most unpleasant social feature of this remarkable country.

When the American colonists renounced their allegiance to George III., and assumed an attitude of independence, it was confidently predicted that their nationality, unsupported by monarchical and aristocratic institutions, could not possibly endure beyond the first outburst of enthusiasm. The experience of eighty years has failed to realise these prognostications; and it may be said that the principle of self-reliance has never been so successfully tested as in the history of the United States. Left to themselves, and favoured by breadth of territory, the progress of the American people has for many years been no ordinary phenomenon.

At the Declaration of Independence, the number of states was thirteen, with a population of about 3,000,000—a wonderfully small number, to have defied and beat off the British monarchy. In 1800, when several new states had been added to the confederacy, the population was little more than 6,000,000. During the next fifty years, there was a great advance. In 1850, when the number of states had increased to thirty-one, along with several territories not organised into states, the population had reached 23,191,918. At this point, it was 3,000,000 ahead of that of the island of Great Britain; and as at this ratio it doubles every twenty-five years, we might infer that towards the conclusion of the present century, the United States will possess a population of not far from 100,000,000.

Such are the prospects entertained by the Americans themselves, with perhaps too slight a regard for a seriously disturbing element in their calculations. The present population, as above stated, are not all whites—exercising the privileges and animated with the sentiments of freemen. In the number, are comprehended 3,204,345 slaves, and 433,643 persons of colour nominally free, but occupying a socially degraded position. The presence of such an immense mass of population, alien in blood and aspect, in the midst of the commonwealth, is an awkward, and, I fear, a dangerous, feature in the condition of the United States, which cannot be passed over in any impartial estimate of the prospective growth and dignity of the country.

At the Revolution, there was, comparatively speaking, but a handful of negro slaves in the several states, introduced from Africa during the colonial administration; and it was probably expected by Washington and others, that in time the number would diminish, and that, finally, it would disappear. The reverse, however, has been the result. In the New England States, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, slavery, wherever it existed, has been legally abolished, leaving generally a residuum of free negroes; but in

* In the year ending June 30, 1852, the imports into the United States from Great Britain and Ireland were valued at 90,628,339 dollars, and the exports to 115,569,973 dollars.

the other older states, slavery is still in force, besides being ingrafted in various new states, which have been acquired by conquest or purchase; so that, as an institution with large vested interests, it is stronger and more lifelike than ever. According to the census of 1850, it existed in fifteen out of thirty-one states; in one of them, however—New Jersey—it was in the form of an expiring apprenticeship.

For a number of years, as is well known, there has been much angry discussion on the subject between the northern and southern states; and at times the contention has been so great, as to lead to mutual threats of a dismemberment of the Union. A stranger has no little difficulty in understanding how much of this war of words is real, and how much is merely an explosion of *bunkum*. In 1820, there occurred a kind of truce between the belligerents, called the Missouri Compromise; by which, in virtue of an act of Congress, all the territories north of latitude 36° 30' were guaranteed free institutions. By means of subsequent compromises, fugitive slaves were legally reclaimable in the free states; and there the matter rested, till the recent passage of the act constituting the state of Nebraska, by which the newly incorporated inhabitants, though north of the line of demarcation, are left the choice of their own institutions—at liberty, if they please, to introduce slavery. The commotion in the north, consequent on this transaction, has been considerable; and according to a portion of the press, in tracing the progress of events, 'Slavery is at length triumphant; Freedom subservient'—a sufficiently sorrowful confession to make respecting a country which prides itself on its achievements in the cause of civil liberty.

I repeat, it is difficult to understand what is the genuine public feeling on this entangled question; for with all the demonstrations in favour of freedom in the north, there does not appear in that quarter to be any practical relaxation of the usages which condemn persons of African descent to an inferior social status. There seems, in short, to be a fixed notion throughout the whole of the states, whether slave or free, that the coloured is by nature a subordinate race; and that, in no circumstances, can it be considered equal to the white. Apart from commercial views, this opinion lies at the root of American slavery; and the question would need to be argued less on political and philanthropic than on physiological grounds. Previous to my departure from Richmond, in Virginia, I had an accidental conversation with a gentleman, a resident in that city, on the subject of slavery. This person gave it as his sincere opinion, founded on close observation, and a number of physiological facts, that negroes were an inferior species or variety of human beings, destined, or at least eminently suited, to be servants to the white and more noble race; that, considering their faculties, they were happier in a state of slavery than in freedom, or when left to their own expedients for subsistence; and that their sale and transfer was, from these premises, legitimate and proper. Such opinions are, perhaps, extreme; but, on the whole, I believe they pretty fairly represent the views of the south on the subject of slavery,* which is considered to be not merely a conventional, but an absolutely natural institution, sanctioned by the precept and example of ministers of the Gospel, and derived from the most remote usages of antiquity.

It may have been merely a coincidence, but it is remarkable, that all with whom I conversed in the States on the distinctions of race, tended to the opinion, that the negro was in many respects an inferior being, and his existence in America an

anomaly. The want of mental energy and forethought, the love of finery and of trifling amusements, distaste of persevering industry and bodily labour, as well as overpowering animal propensities, were urged as general characteristics of the coloured population; and it was alleged, that when consigned to their own resources, they do not successfully compete with the white Anglo-Americans, or with the immigrant Irish; the fact being added, that in slavery they increase at the same ratio as the whites, while in freedom, and affected with the vices of society, the ratio of increase falls short by one-third. Much of this was new to me; and I was not a little surprised to find, when speaking a kind word for at least a very unfortunate, if not brilliant race, that the people of the northern states, though repudiating slavery, did not think more favourably of the negro character than those further south. Throughout Massachusetts, and other New England States, likewise in the states of New York, Pennsylvania, &c., there is a rigorous separation of the white and black races. In every city, there are white and black schools, and white and black churches. No dark-skinned child is suffered to attend a school for white children. In Boston, celebrated for its piety and philanthropy, all the coloured children require to go to one school, however inconveniently situated it may be for some of them. This school was instituted in 1812, and the following is the existing ordinance respecting it:—'The coloured population in the city not being sufficiently numerous to require more than one school, it has been thought proper to provide in this the means of instruction in all the branches of learning, which are taught in the several schools for white children.*' In New York, there are nine public schools exclusively for coloured children, besides a coloured orphan asylum. In the city of Providence, Rhode Island, it is ordained that 'there shall be three public schools maintained exclusively for the instruction of coloured children, the grades thereof to be determined from time to time by the school committee.' In Philadelphia, there is a similar organisation of district schools for coloured children.

As an explanation of these distinctions, I was informed that white would not sit beside coloured children; and further, that coloured children, after a certain age, did not correspondingly advance in learning—their intellect being apparently incapable of being cultured beyond a particular point. From whatever cause, it was clear that a reluctance to associate with persons of negro descent was universally inculcated in infancy, and strengthened with age. The result is a singular social phenomenon. We see, in effect, two nations—one white and another black—growing up together within the same political circle, but never mingling on a principle of equality.

The people of England, who see a negro only as a wandering curiosity, are not at all aware of the repugnance generally entertained towards persons of colour in the United States: it appeared to me to amount to an absolute monomania. As for an alliance with one of the race, no matter how faint the shade of colour, it would inevitably lead to a loss of caste, as fatal to social position and family ties as any that occurs in the Brahminical system. Lately, a remarkable illustration of this occurred at New Orleans. It was a law case, involving the question of purity of blood. The plaintiff, George Pandelly, a gentleman in a respectable station, sued Victor Wiltz for slander. Wiltz had said that Pandelly had a taint of negro blood; inasmuch as one of his ancestresses was a mulatto of 'African combination.' In describing the case to the court, the counsel for the plaintiff was so overcome by the enormity of the offence, that he shed tears! He produced several aged witnesses to prove that the

* See *Types of Mankind*; by J. C. Nott and Geo. R. Gliddon. 1 vol., 4to. Traubner & Co., London; and Lippincott, Philadelphia. 1854.

* *Rules of the School Committee of the City of Boston, 1855, p. 38.*

ancestress, mentioned by Wiltz as a mulatto, was the great-great-grandmother of the plaintiff, and was not a mulatto of negro origin, but a woman who had derived her colour from Indian blood! Satisfied with the evidence on this important point, the jury found a verdict for the plaintiff, but no damages; which was considered satisfactory—the sole object of Mr Pandelly having been to establish the purity of his descent.

All the efforts, in my opinion, which may be made with a view to influencing the south in favour of emancipation, are valueless so long as there exists a determined resolution throughout northern society to consider the coloured race, in all its varieties of shade, as beneath the dignity of human nature, and in no respect worthy to be associated with, countenanced, honoured, or so much as spoken to on terms of equality. Excluded, by such inflexible and carefully nourished prejudices, from entertaining the slightest prospect of ever rising beyond the humblest position; condemned to infamy from birth; not tolerated in the railway-cars which are devoted to the use of the whites; turned away from any of the ordinary hotels, no matter what be their character, means, or style of dress; in a word, treated from first to last as *Paria*—how can we expect that objects of so much contumely are to improve in their faculties or feelings, or to possess, in any degree, the virtue of self-respect? The wonder, indeed, is, that they conduct themselves so well as they do, or that they assume anything like the dress or manners of civilised persons.

Glad to have had an opportunity of calling attention to many cheering and commendable features in the social system of the Americans, I consider it not less my duty to say, that in their general conduct towards the coloured race, a wrong is done which cannot be alluded to except in terms of the deepest sorrow and reproach. I cannot think without shame of the pious and polished New Englanders adding to their offences on this score, the guilt of hypocrisy. Affecting to weep over the sufferings of imaginary dark-skinned heroes and heroines; denouncing in well-studied platform oratory the horrid sin of reducing human beings to the abject condition of chattels; bitterly scornful of southern planters for hard-hearted selfishness and depravity; fanatical on the subject of abolition; wholly frantic at the spectacle of fugitive slaves seized and carried back to their owners—these very persons are daily surrounded by manumitted slaves, or their educated descendants, yet shrink from them as if the touch were pollution, and look as if they would expire at the bare idea of inviting one of them to their house or table. Until all this is changed, the northern Abolitionists place themselves in a false position, and do damage to the cause they espouse. If they think that negroes are MEN, let them give the world an evidence of their sincerity, by moving the reversal of all those social and political arrangements which now in the free states exclude persons of colour, not only from the common courtesies of life, but from the privileges and honours of citizens. I say, until this is done, the uproar about abolition is a delusion and a snare. As things remain, the owners of slaves are furnished with the excuse that emancipation, besides being attended with no practical benefit, would be an act of cruelty to their dependents; for that the education given to free persons of colour only aggravates the severity of their condition—makes them feel a sense of degradation, from which, as slaves in a state of ignorance, they are happily exempted. The great question, then, is, What is to be done with the slaves if they are set at liberty? Are they to grow up a powerful alien people within the commonwealth, dangerous in their numbers, but doubly dangerous in their consciousness of wrong, and in the passions which may incite them to acts of vengeance?

Serious as is this question, there is one, perhaps, still more serious. Are the slaves to go on increasing in a geometrical ratio—6,000,000 in 1875, 12,000,000 in 1900; and so on through an infinitude of years? Sympathising so far with the Americans in the dilemma in which circumstances have placed them, I cannot say they have acted with discretion in seeing this portentous evil widen in its sphere, and swell to such vast dimensions, as at length to go beyond the reach of all ordinary measures of correction. Nay, at this moment the canker is extending its ramifications over the boundless territories of the West; and it is to be feared that, in a few years hence, the northern and middle free states will be but a speck in comparison with the slave region. This is a thing which concerns not the Americans alone, but the whole civilised world. The highest intellects of Europe are looking with breathless wonder at the spread of the Anglo-Saxon race, impelled by their instincts, and led by the hand of God over the vast continent of America.* They talk of the not distant time when there will be a nation counted by hundreds of millions, speaking the English tongue, and governed by the institutes of freemen. But always, in the midst of their glowing anticipations, there arises a terrific spectre—human slavery—reminding them that it was this which blighted the old civilisations, Egypt, Greece, Rome—and why not America! Already in Virginia, naturally rich and beautiful, there is a growing impoverishment, notwithstanding that large sums are realised by the individuals who rear human stock for the southern plantations. In the partially deteriorated state of that fine old English domain, and its apparent incapability of keeping pace with the more prosperous communities of the north, it may be said to approximate to the physical and moral condition which disfigured Italy in the second century. Is history to be an endless series of repetitions?

What the Americans may do to counteract the danger which threatens them, I cannot take it upon me to say. With a growing belief that slavery is injurious to the industrial and moral progress of a state, the institution may, in no great length of time, disappear from Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky, because these states enjoy a temperate climate, and are a fitting field for the settlement of enterprising immigrants. Its expulsion from the intertropical regions in the south, is matter for less sanguine hope. The demand for American cotton in the markets of Europe, increasing year by year, too surely strengthens the institution in the southern states, and surrounds the subject with difficulties, not to be treated lightly or sentimentally, but with the profound consideration of practical statesmanship. That things can remain as they are, as regards the relationship between the South and the North, is by no means probable. The interests and feelings of both are becoming mutually opposite and hostile; and it should occasion little surprise to learn that the South, smarting under alleged losses and indignities, took the initiative of breaking up the Union, and setting up for itself as an independent power. In such a conjuncture, the North, reduced to a second-rate sovereignty, could scarcely be expected to retain a hold over the West, which would either form a third group of independent states, or seek for federation with the South. And so, in so far as political unity is concerned, falls the mighty fabric raised by Washington, and of whose destiny such high anticipations have been entertained! In Canada—free from the taint and the contentions consequent on slavery, and enjoying a high degree of liberty—I found it to be a common belief, that the

* M. de Tocqueville speaks of the progressive settlement of the Anglo-Saxons, as 'driven by the hand of God' across the western wilderness, at the average rate of seventeen miles per annum.

union of the States could not possibly long hold together; and that the North, in the event of a rupture, would sue for a federation with the British American provinces, as a natural ally. That these provinces—united, populous, and prosperous—will, some day, attain the dignity of an independent nation, few can doubt; but it is evident, that annexation to the States in present circumstances would be neither agreeable nor expedient, and will not be thought of.*

While lamenting the unsatisfactory condition, present and prospective, of the coloured population, it is gratifying to consider the energetic measures that have been adopted by the African Colonisation Society to transplant, with their own consent, free negroes from America to Liberia. Viewing these endeavours as at all events a means of encouraging emancipation, checking the slave-trade, and at the same time of introducing Christianity and civilised usages into Africa, they appear to have been deserving of more encouragement than they have had the good-fortune to receive. Successful only in a moderate degree, the operations of this society are not likely to make a deep impression on the numbers of the coloured population; and the question of their disposal still remains unsettled.

With a conviction that much harm has been done by exasperating reproaches from this side of the Atlantic on the subject of slavery, I have done little more than glance at the institution, or the dangers which, through its agency, menace the integrity of the Union. I have, likewise, refrained from any lengthened comment on the constant discord arising from the violence of faction, and have barely alluded to the extreme hazards into which the nation, under the impulse of popular clamour, is, from time to time, hurried by reckless legislation.

Trustful that the American confederation is not destined to be dismembered through the unhappy conflicts which now agitate the community—trustful that the question of slavery is to be settled in a manner more peaceful than is figured in the speech of Mr Howe—and having great faith in the power and acute intelligence of the American people to carry them through every difficulty (all their political squabbles notwithstanding), provided they will only take time to look ahead, and avoid the perils that beset their course, I bid them and their country a respectful farewell.

At noon of the 14th of December, I went on board the steamer *Europa* at New York, and in a few hours the shores of America sunk beneath the waves of the Atlantic. In thus quitting the New World, I felt how imperfect had been my acquaintanceship with it. But I was pleased to think that I had realised a long-cherished wish, and was now able to speak, though with diffidence, of the great country to which so many inquiring minds are at present eagerly directed.

* On this point, I may be permitted to draw attention to the following emphatic passages in a speech in the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia, delivered in May last by the Hon. Joseph Howe, provincial secretary:—"Sir, I believe annexation would be unwise for other reasons. I believe the United States are large enough already. In a few years, the population of that country must reach 100,000,000; they have as much work to do now as they can do well; and I believe before many years, if their union is preserved, they will have more work to do than any legislature can despatch after their modes in 365 days. . . . There is another question which must be settled before you or I, sir, or any Nova Scotian, will be a party to annexation. Sir, I believe the question of slavery must be settled sooner or later by bloodshed. I do not believe it can ever be settled in any other way. That question shadows the institutions, and poisons the springs of public and social life among our neighbours. It saps all principles, overrides all obligations. Why, sir, I did believe, until very lately, that no constable, armed with a law which violated the law of God, could capture a slave in any of the northern states; but the Fugitive Slave Law has been enforced even in Puritan New England, where tea could not be sold or stamps collected."

After a voyage unmarked by any particular incident, I arrived in Liverpool on the evening of the 26th of December. W. C.

END OF THINGS AS THEY ARE IN AMERICA.*

THE NAVAL RENDEZVOUS.

THE other day, while walking through the streets of Seaport, the letters V. R., with an enormous royal crown between them, repeatedly attracted our notice. These well-known symbols headed an announcement, that Her Majesty's ship the *Alligator*, Captain John Pointblank, required a number of able-bodied and ordinary seamen and landsmen to complete her complement; and that eligible young men, from eighteen to twenty-four years of age, should lose no time in applying at the Rendezvous, Neptune Tavern, Harbour Point. Musing over this, we recalled to mind the very characteristic style in which Admiral Sir Charles Napier placarded Portsmouth when he was appointed captain of the *Powerful* in 1839, prior to that ship sailing to join the Mediterranean squadron speedily to be employed in the Syrian war. The following was 'Old Charley's' invitation to the Blue-jackets at Portsmouth: 'Wanted, active seamen for the *Powerful*—Captain Napier. The *Powerful* is a fine ship, and in the event of a war, will be able to take her own part.' That was all he said; and the result was, that he speedily got as fine a crew as ever manned a liner. Napier shewed that he knew what he was about when he issued his brief, simple, manly, seamanlike announcement. Some captains put forth flaming placards, offering incredible inducements to men to enter; and what is the consequence? Landsmen, boys, and a riffraff of ordinary seamen, may thereby be induced to offer themselves in greater numbers than are required; but when the real first-rate man-o'-war's-man, on the look-out for a ship for a fresh cruise, has spelled through the placard, he contemptuously rolls his quid, and passes on with an emphatic expression of disgust. He knows his own value, and also knows by experience what the service is; therefore any cajolery or exaggeration renders him indignant and suspicious of the character of the officer who unwisely resorts to it. In a word, good seamen like to be treated as intelligent men: place confidence in them, and they will place confidence in you; and so vice versa. No class is quicker to resent anything like deception.

Seaport is not a regular naval station, but the *Alligator*, being 100 or 200 men short of her complement, has been sent down here to pick them up, previous to sailing for her station in the Pacific. Thinking over this matter, we saunter unconsciously in the direction of Harbour Point, and perceive the ship herself—a dashing first-class frigate—lying at anchor a couple of miles off in the roads, a few slatternly-looking merchantmen at anchor near her, serving as admirable foils to set her off. She certainly is a crack ship to all appearance; and as she lies, head to the stream, the evening sun gleams along her rows of grinning teeth, whilst her lofty masts and symmetrical spars are finely relieved against the sky. We see a cutter put off from her side—at first a mere speck on the water, but ere long we can note the oars dipping with the regularity of machinery. Rapidly it skims over the intervening expanse, and we see the gold band round the cap of the midshipman in the stern-sheets, glittering in the alanting sunbeams, and soon we can discern his features. A score or two more strokes, and the cutter

* Although the above concludes the work of which it forms a part, the writer will not lose sight of the subject, but present occasionally, under the title of *American Jottings*, notices of some of the more remarkable phenomena in American life and progress as may be interesting both to the intending emigrant and the general reader.

sweeps alongside the pier, the men peak their oars, and the bowman makes a grab with his boat-hook at the nearest pile. Fine stalwart fellows are the cutter's crew! How neatly they are dressed; and how well they look in their simple uniform! Their low-crowned, broad-brimmed varnished hats, and their blue check shirt-collars edged with white, turned broadly back over their shoulders, leaving their bronzed necks bare and free of all restraint, offer a suggestive and very favourable contrast to the headgear of that soldier who stands near us gazing at them, half-choked as he is by his black leather stock as stiff as sheet-iron! No wonder that one of them looks up at him, and grinningly mutters something about a boiled lobster. Meanwhile, the middy says a few words to the cockswain, and lightly jumps on the landing, whence he ascends the pier, and walks to the Rendezvous. Let us follow him.

The Rendezvous is a glaringly-painted and somewhat flashy-looking tavern, situated within a few yards of the pier. A huge sign-board over the doorway exhibits to our admiring gaze old Neptune, seated, trident in hand, in a chariot, drawn by conventional dolphins over an intensely blue sea, with mermaids disporting around him, all in classical style. From the window immediately over this sign, a Union Jack is suspended from a staff, and flaps over the heads of a noisy group of seamen, landmen, women, and children. One poor woman is weeping bitterly, because, as we learn, her husband, a sailor, has volunteered, and is already safe aboard the *Alligator*, sorely against the wish and will of his disconsolate spouse—a neatly-dressed and interesting-looking young woman. A strapping man-o'-war's man, with immense bushy red whiskers meeting under his chin, is doing his best to console her, in a speech replete with excellent salt-water philosophy, and we come up in time to hear the eloquent peroration.

'And to clench the argufication,' says he, 'this is what I says and upholds—the Queen's service is out o' sight the best of all services now-a-days, and the only one as a feller of spirit will put up with. Now, marm, no offence, but you doesn't seem to know the rights of the case when you take on so about your husband Bill joining us. A beggarly merchantman isn't to be named the same day with a man-o'-war. In the merchant service, they grinds the very marrow out of your bones; they feeds you badly, and berths you in a place worse than a dog-kennel; and when you're used up and worn out, they casts you aside like a broken stick, and, mind ye, not one farthing of pension, nor provision or reward for past service of any sort. But when you serve the Queen's Majesty—God bless her!—you gets the best of food and plenty of it; you're well clothed, well berthed, and made out-of-hand comfortable. They treats you *as a man*, and only you do a man's duty, and there's nothing, no nothing to complain of. If so be as you get maimed, there's Greenwich under your lee, or leastways a pension for wounds; and when you have served your time with good character, you get your pension sartain sure for life.'

'But what is to become of me while he is away?'

'Why, Bill 'lots you a ticket for his pay, to be sure, and you gets your 'lowance reg'lar from the agent; and then there's prize-money to be picked up, and besides reg'lar pay, there's *good-conduct-money*. D'ye see this gold stripe on my arm? Well, I'm an able seaman, and that stripe means two shillings and sevenpence per month extra pay for good conduct—that's what it means. I expect soon to get another stripe, and that will give me twice as much; and a man with three stripes gets treble as much, or four pounds eleven shillings and threepence a year extra. They gives you another guess-sort of stripes in the merchant service, I reckon!' and here he looks meaningly at one or two merchant sailors standing by, who say not a

word, neither do we, for we know that all he has said is the truth.

'Is that little boy yours?' continues the tar, alluding to a stout boy five or six years of age clinging to the woman's gown.

'He is; and whatever is to become of him, now his father has gone and deserted us to'—

'Hold hard, marm, if you please,' somewhat angrily exclaims the man-o'-war's-man; 'what you call desertion, is just the best and wisest thing Bill could have done; and as to that boy of yours, why, now his father's one of us, that boy can be educated and made a man of at Greenwich Hospital Schools, free gratis for nothing. There now—it's the real ship-shape truth I am saying. Moreover, marm, when Bill comes back from this cruise of ours, when the ship's paid off, if he makes up his mind to stay in the navy—and he'll be a fool if he doesn't—he will get six weeks' leave of absence to see you; and mind ye, his full-pay will be going on all that time without stoppage! Oh, never tell me about the merchant service, give me the Queen's! And your husband, marm—I saw him afore he went aboard; he's a smart-looking chap, and they are sure to make a main-topman of him; he will rise, never fear, and come home a first-class petty officer, like enough. And as to this young tar,' patting the boy's head with one huge rough paw, and giving him a shilling with the other, 'I hope that by the time his father has done with active service, and is moored alongside you in some snug berth for life, he will be sarving his Queen and country in turn, and honestly 'arning a pension to make his own old age comfortable. It's truth I've said throughout; and if anybody here present can gainsay it, let him speak. Now, marm, you said you wanted to send a message to Bill aboard the *Alligator*; and as our cutter is lying here, if you will come with me, we will speak with Tom Keel, the cockswain, and rely on it he'll deliver it, and any little thing you want to send to your husband; and I'll talk to Bill, and stand by him myself as a friend when I get aboard again. Ho! cheer up, and never be down-hearted—yo-ho!' Half-saying, half-singing the last sentence, the kind-hearted and sympathising fellow leads the mother and child down towards the cutter, and we elbow our way through the crowd, and enter the Rendezvous, much interested and pleased with the little episode we have witnessed at the doorway.

Near the bar, we pass a struggling group, composed of three or four young fellows, whose sweethearts and sisters are vehemently imploring them not to join the ship-of-war, lest dismal and unheard-of sufferings and calamities should be their lot. Entering a large, low back-room, we find a miscellaneous assemblage of young seamen and landmen drinking, smoking, and confusedly talking. Only one man-o'-war's-man is present, and he is a short, square-built, old, petty officer, as we judge by the crown and anchor embroidered on the sleeve of his jacket. We learn that all the company are desirous to enter the frigate, and are now waiting their turns to be summoned to the room overhead, where one of the lieutenants of the *Alligator* judges of the eligibility of each volunteer; and if the latter is a seaman, puts a few professional questions to him, to form an idea of what he would be fit for on board. Recently, at a Scotch rendezvous, one worthy, who professed to be a seaman, confidently informed the astounded officer in answer to a question, that the mizzen-topsail is hoisted on the maintopgallant-mast! Unless a ship is in most urgent want of hands, a considerable percentage of the patriotic youths and men who offer their valuable services to their grateful country are rejected by the examining-officer for one reason or other; and those whom he thinks eligible, next undergo a physical examination by the doctor, who in turn is sure to pronounce not a few unfit for service. Knowing this, we look around, and mentally

calculate how many of those present seem to be of the stuff to make men-o'-war's-men. A few evidently are sailors; and although we should hardly take them for A.B.'s, yet they will very probably be accepted: but the rest seem emphatically a queer lot at first sight. Four or five have the aspect of dissipated run-away apprentices; an equal number are stout, ragged, dirty youths, of eighteen to twenty, who do not appear to have followed any particular calling hitherto; one very fat young fellow we hear addressed as 'butcher,' and a glance at his greasy dress and raw-beefy appearance, convinces us that such has been his actual calling; a couple of pale sickly men near him must certainly be weavers; near them is a hulking savage-looking 'navvy,' and a very fine handsome young shipwright, as we know he is by his general aspect, and his blue frock and tarry moleskin trousers, with a rule peeping from the pocket; and two stolid ploughmen, in white smock-frocks and high-lows, sit gaping open-mouthed between a broken-nosed, bandy-legged young tailor, and a dissipated blacksmith. Now, putting ourselves in the place of the examining officer, we think the stout youths will do for the after-guard and mizzen-top; the ploughmen and the navvy are rather too old and stiff-jointed ever to make active topmen, but they are big double-fisted fellows, and will make capital 'holders;' the blacksmith might prove an acquisition, if a good workman, to the armourer's crew; the butcher, if there is a vacancy for him, would be useful in his own line; the shipwright would join the carpenter's crew; but the tailor and the weavers we would decline altogether. Officer and doctor conjointly will perhaps reject one-half of the volunteers we see; but as a general rule, it is really astonishing what the discipline of a man-o'-war can effect with the most unpromising subjects. Everybody knows that a year's severe drill at barracks converts a stupid country bumpkin into a serviceable soldier, and in a lesser degree the same improvement of raw material results in a man-o'-war. True it is, that to make a prime seaman, the younger a boy enters the profession the better; and countrymen and mechanics of twenty to twenty-five years will become only very ordinary seamen at the best. Many of them, in fact, will be rated as landsmen, and do landsmen's duties, however long they may remain in the navy.

Meanwhile, our old petty officer has just freshened his nip, and after taking a long pull at the tankard, raises his voice and thumps the table to obtain a hearing, for he is prepared to favour the loyal and spirited auditory with a brief exposition of his view of the new career they are ambitious to embrace. In fact, the old Salt may be called a sort of naval recruiting-sergeant, with this material difference, that we know he will not grossly lie and deceive: he will not, for instance, gull that clown with the hope of some day becoming an epauletted post-captain; nor will he flatter the young seamen by reminding them that Captain Cook served long years before the mast in a collier brig, as they themselves have hitherto done. Hear him! 'Now, my hearties, some o' ye know what life afloat is—in the merchant service, that is—but most o' ye don't know the jib-boom from the poop-lantern. Well, every man jack o' ye will meet with his desarts and find his level once ye get aboard. A man's a man in the Queen's service; he must do his duty, and his officers will do their duty by him. Perhaps some o' ye may be a bit scared about man-o'-war discipline; but I'll tell ye what, without strict discipline a man-o'-war would be just a floating—Ye know what I mean. Now, in the *Alligator*!'—

'Any nice aboard the *Alligator*?' saucily interrupts one of the dissipated-looking youths.

'Ay, and cats to catch 'em!' grimly retorts the old tar, perfectly comprehending the drift of the question. 'Tell ye what, young feller; I've sarved man and boy

in the navy all my life, and never has my back been scratched with a cat's claws, and no man's ever is who does his duty as he ought; but mind what ye are about, my lad, when you get aboard—though I don't think they'll take such a hard bargain; but if they do, mind you steer small, and clap a round turn on your jaw-tackle, and never shove your oar in as ye did just now, or else you'll soon foot the gratings at the gang-way, and have slops sarved out to ye man-o'-war fashion!'

At this rebuke, the gang of dissipated youths look uncomfortably at one another, and one or two begin to chew vigorously a piece of pigtail—though they know it will make them qualmish—by way of shewing that they intend to become sailors, in spite of all the cats in the navy, we suppose. Then the old man-o'-war's-man discourses much in the same style as we heard his shipmate do at the doorway of the Rendezvous, and fails not to express his conviction that they will have a much better chance of picking up prize-money from 'them beggarly tallow-eating Rushans' on the Pacific and South American station, than if they were ordered to the Black Sea or Baltic, where he sagaciously opines there will be only 'monkey's allowance—more kicks than coppers.' He fails not to tell the merchant sailors present, that they will find the main-deck of the *Alligator* a Queen's drawing-room in comparison with the dark, damp, dirty, dismal dog-holes of forecables in merchant ships; and that at meal-times they will not be squatted, like a parcel of Feejees, round a dirty mess-tub, containing a lump of 'old horse,' tough and tasteless as a bull's hide, accompanied by biscuits all alive with weevils; but that they will sit at neat mess-tables, and eat prime beef and pork from clean plates, in a civilised fashion; and to sum up, he emphatically declares that they will 'live like fighting-cocks.' Next, he discusses the solid advantages of entering the navy, under the new regulations, for ten years' continuous service, whereby a seaman not only receives higher pay, but may get a pension of sixpence a day for life when discharged at the end of the term; or eightpence a day for fifteen years' service; or about a shilling a day after twenty years' continuous service: leading seamen and petty officers getting much more. And so he overhauls the coil of the matter, very much to his own satisfaction and to ours, and, we trust, also to that of the enlightened and patriotic company, loyal men and spirited and enterprising youths included. But it is now high time to go, for several of the young merchant seamen have been summoned to the room above, for examination into their qualifications; and the tipsy blacksmith is getting obstreperous; and one of the ploughmen, excited by unaccustomed libations, is challenging the butcher to wrestle; and three of the dissipated youths have turned mortally sick through chewing tobacco, in order to shew they were of the stuff to make sailors; and the gruff old petty officer is indulging in some very characteristic sarcasms, and mysterious innuendoes, and prophetic denunciations, which we understand much better than any of the young gentlemen to whom they are especially addressed.

Ere quitting the precincts of the Rendezvous, we learn, on inquiry, that hitherto hardly any prime seamen have been entered on the books of the *Alligator*, but that a few ordinaries, and plenty of landsmen of all

* This is no exaggeration, as the following scale of provisions daily allowed at the present time to every person serving in the navy amply proves:—Biscuit, 1 pound, or soft bread, 1½ pounds; spirits, ¼ gill; fresh meat, 1 pound; vegetables, ½ pound; sugar, 1½ ounces; chocolate, 1 ounce; tea, ½ ounce. And when necessary, in lieu of fresh meat and vegetables, salt pork, 1 pound; peas, ½ pint, every alternate day: salt-beef, 1 pound; flour, 9 ounces; suet, 3 ounces; currants or raisins, 14 ounces, every alternate day. And weekly, oatmeal, ½ pint; mustard, ½ ounce; pepper, ½ ounce; vinegar, ½ pint per man. All are well cooked, and served punctually to the minute; and if a man is ill, and cannot eat his allowance, the value of it is set down to his credit!

sorts, offer themselves. When the frigate fires her evening-gun, the lieutenant will put off in the cutter, taking with him the pick of the men he has entered that day; and if we look in during the evening, we shall find some 'liberty men' from the frigate, together with volunteers and a select party of friends of both sexes, holding a jovial carouse. Cordially wishing they may enjoy it, we steer our own private course, complacently humming:

In short, a tar's life—you may say that I told it—
Who leaves quiet and peace foreign countries to roam,
Is of all other lives—I'll be bound to uphold it—
The best life in the world—*next to staying at home!*

M A R E T I M O.

CHAPTER II.

THE ISLAND OF MARETIMO.

WE left Walter proceeding with his soldier-companions from the spot where he had been rescued from his perilous position towards another part of the island. In about a quarter of an hour, the sea came again in sight. Beyond it, at the distance of some miles, rose a lofty mountain, the summit of which was still slightly tinged with gold by the rays of the sun, although all the rest of the landscape was clothed in the shadows of evening. This was the island of Favignana; and beyond, in the dim distance, stretched the hilly coasts of Sicily.

Walter, however, gave but a casual glance at the beautiful scene before him, for he was too weak to care much for anything save repose. They were moving along a path cut in the face of an enormous precipice, and could just see, far below, scattered along the beach—the long outline of which was marked in the dim twilight by a broad belt of foam—some small huts and cottages, with here and there a boat drawn up upon the shingle; but this was not their destination. Turning round a point of the rock, they came in sight of a kind of fortified house, with a lofty flag-staff, one or two towers, and windows that looked like loopholes—together, in fact, a place of gloomy and unpromising appearance. Upon a small esplanade in front, a sentinel paced to and fro. The light on that elevated spot was still sufficient to enable all these things to be distinguished. The party was challenged as it approached. A man advanced and gave the password; a drawbridge was let down; a moat was crossed; and soon the footsteps of the party echoed beneath a vaulted passage, lighted by a lamp swinging from the centre. Walter felt very much as if he was entering a prison; and, indeed, from the surly manner of his companions, was inclined to think for a moment that he had fallen into the hands of some lawless chieftain. His geographical recollections were not at that time very clear, and there was something so mysterious in the appearance and disappearance of the person by whom he had been saved, that he felt rather disposed to entertain the thought that he was some poetical pirate—an Italian Conrad, who had not yet been celebrated in rhyme. These ideas, however, were soon put to flight, for he was now introduced into a handsome apartment, elegantly furnished, where a tall, dry, military-looking man, addressed by one of the soldiers as the commandant, rose to receive him. 'Sir,' said he, 'I am glad that my people have been the means of saving you from a very perilous position, and regret that the state of my health prevented my being at least a witness to your escape.'

Walter was too feeble to understand that this was a mere Italian subterfuge—an excuse for idleness and indifference—and endeavoured to murmur thanks as he sank into a chair. Then the thought uppermost in his mind found vent.

'But who was that noble person?' said he.

The commandant affected not to notice this question, but very properly suggested that now was the time for taking some refreshment. His manner, though hard, was courteous; and Walter gladly accepted the invitation. Indeed, the sight of a roast fowl, and two or three ragouts, with a large jug of Falernian, effectually weaned him for a time from all sentimental ideas of gratitude. He felt that he owed a duty to his corporeal nature, and set to work with surprising energy and good-will. The commandant lolled in his easy-chair, making cigarettes, and looking at him half benevolently, and half in mere astonishment. He had never seen a man eat at that rate before. At length he took out his watch, and looking at it, said with a certain pedantic affectation of humour: 'My dear young friend, you have been eating without intermission for half an hour, and I have a book on these shelves'—pointing to some two dozen volumes that formed his library—'which states that fearful dangers are run by indulgence in appetite under such circumstances.'

Walter thought this advice came rather late; but was not sorry. He had eaten his fill, and felt no terrible symptoms. On the contrary, he found his vigour and presence of mind rapidly returning, and for the first time properly understood into what society he had fallen. It was evident that his host was commander of the garrison of that little island, which formed part of the dominions of the kingdom of the two Sicilies; and it was also evident, that the stranger by whose means he had been delivered, held no situation of authority there. He had been completely put aside—was apparently forgotten; and Walter felt that it would require some diplomacy to obtain an account of him.

After a little while, the commandant, seeing that his guest appeared to have quite recovered his strength, asked him the details of his shipwreck, and shewed a curiosity to know who he was. Walter told his story as briefly as possible, and concluded by asking under whose hospitable roof he happened to be. The commandant was evidently delighted to have to talk of himself, and said that his name was Girolamo di Georgio; that he had been for many years chief in authority on that little island; that he reigned over a population of about one hundred souls; that he had no amusements, save shooting amidst the rocks, or boating when he chose to risk going through the surf; that when very idle, he sometimes read; and, in fact, talked away for about an hour of these small matters, as only men secluded from the world and shut up in the notion of their own importance can talk. Walter nodded several times, but was kept awake by the hope that an opportunity would occur of obtaining some information about the stranger. The commandant, however, spoke of everything else, but seemed carefully to avoid that subject, so that our Englishman was compelled at length abruptly to put the question which had so long hung upon his lips.

There was a man in the room who seemed to notice too attentively what was going on, and paused in his service to listen. The commandant's face became grave. 'That person,' said he after a pause, 'has no name. We call him the Prisoner.'

'Then this is a prison as well as a fortress?'

The commandant looked uneasy under this questioning; but perhaps in order to avoid giving the explanation required, talked generally of the Neapolitan

state-prisons on the islands of the *Ægates*. He was surprised that Walter did not know all about them. Their reputation, he said, was European. On the morrow he would have the pleasure of pointing out to his guest, on the lofty summit of Favignana, a tower where dwelt many who would willingly change places with his charge. This was a slip of the tongue, for it brought round the conversation to the point he was endeavouring to avoid. The man, however, had by this time left the room, driven away by a frown and a sign; and the commandant, giving way to his natural garrulity, said: 'Sir Englishman, although I am what the disaffected call a jailer, I am not a very hard one, as you will have guessed from the fact that the Prisoner was at large to save you. But as I cannot have the pleasure'—here he bowed—'of keeping you here all your life, and shall have the honour, weather permitting, of sending you away to-morrow, I must make an appeal to your discretion. Do not mention in any place in Sicily that you have seen the Prisoner at large. Endeavour to forget his existence; a careless word may beget disagreeable consequences.'

Walter began to compliment his host on the kindness which was evinced by what he supposed to be an infraction of superior orders.

'Do not imagine,' said the commandant rather hastily, 'that I have run the risk of dismissal by granting to the prisoner any privileges not strictly consonant with orders from head-quarters. My request to you has another motive. If he were known to be at large—as he has a good many friends, young, rash, and lawless—some of them might attempt a rescue, which would of course fail, but might lead to loss of life. Even soldiers object to shooting people, except when absolutely necessary. My men, however, have positive orders to fire into any strange boat that may approach these shores; so that it is in the interest of humanity that I shall have to ask, if not exact, a promise from you that you will not mention publicly what you have seen.'

Walter recognised in the voice of the commandant that mildly despotic tone which is characteristic of foreign military men when placed in positions of authority; and felt that it would be both necessary and kind, for the Prisoner's sake, to give the promise required. When he had done so, the commandant took occasion to compliment the English on their well-known adherence to truth; and, perhaps encouraging himself in a natural loquacity by this belief, began to talk of the Prisoner, at the imminent risk of letting out far more than he intended.

'He comes of a good Sicilian family,' said he. 'I suppose you had no leisure to do more than shake yourself like a dog when you got out of the water—excuse the joke—we hermits are privileged; and a laugh is always allowable. You did not notice, of course, how squalid and serious he looks—quite like a Franciscan friar without the tonsure. Well, now, two or three years ago, he was quite a dandy; a gay, merry fellow, that walked on the Marina—ahem! you know the Marina is the sea-parade. He strutted it like any peacock, cane in hand, with white gloves, among the ladies who were taking their evening walk—whispering to some, smiling at others—as if he thought that life was nothing but an opera-scene. Cospetto! I remember him very well, with his chin close shaven, and his moustache turned up to his eyes, and his hair curled and perfumed; a well-grown Cupid, upon my honour! We have worked a great change in him. 'Tis wonderful how a single year's seclusion tames down the wildest spirits. We made quite a child of the patriot Busconi in that time. He became pious, and died in the most edifying manner. This young man is more serious and sedate now than ever was his father.'

'Then he is an orphan?' exclaimed Walter unguardedly.

A dark expression passed over the commandant's face. It might have been that he was irritated with his own imprudence in thus partially revealing the secrets of the prison-house; but Walter, perhaps because his mind was in a peculiar state of excitement, thought that some deeper feeling was at work beneath that cold, hard countenance, that mask of official caution and polite egotism. He had sufficiently studied life to know that some men pass through tragedies, and even act in crime, without receiving any imprint therefrom in their manners and demeanour: the storms of conscience throw a gloom over the countenance. There are those who contrive to bury the past in forgetfulness, whenever external circumstances do not recall it. Walter watched with curiosity what seemed to him the symptoms of an internal struggle—the repression of a painful, perhaps a self-accusing thought. But the frown and the nervous twitching of the lips soon passed away; and the commandant resumed the appearance of a mere indifferent gossip. It was probable, however, that his mind had travelled to a great distance, for he seemed to forget the question that had disturbed him.

'I am omitting the duties of hospitality,' said he, 'and am talking nonsense here, whilst you must be dying of sleep.'

Walter, who felt wonderfully invigorated by his supper, and hoped to hear more of the person whose story so much interested him, assured the worthy commandant that he could listen to such instructive conversation all night. Your solitary official is marvelously open to flattery. Signor Girolamo di Georgio sank back into his easy-chair, rolled up a fresh cigarette, and went on talking; but to Walter's great chagrin, seemed to change the subject altogether.

'This is a quiet life I lead here,' said he; 'but it was not always so. Fifteen years ago, I had the honour of being aid-de-camp to the governor of Messina. Heigho! that was a pleasant time. Better than being emperor of a dismal rock.'

'And why did you choose so dull a situation in exchange for one so gay?' inquired Walter, who now really began to feel sleepy, but who thought it necessary to shew a little curiosity about the story of his host.

'I don't tell this to everybody,' said the commandant, beginning with the same phrase and the same tone he had adopted ever since his exile to that place, in speaking to any chance visitor who shewed the least inclination to listen; 'but as the incident is quite romantic, it may interest you. I am sorry to admit—and you are at liberty to repeat this everywhere'—and the worthy man was indeed very anxious that his condition should be known and appreciated in the proper quarter—'I admit that I am here as a kind of punishment for a fault I once committed. It was about sixteen years ago, during the occupation of the island of Sicily by your countrymen, that Il Marchese Belmonte, the governor of Messina, lost his wife, whom everybody imagined he loved dearly, and who left him one child, a daughter, named Angela, then about three years old. He mourned awhile; until, indeed, he beheld a lady of somewhat inferior rank, but brilliant in beauty and accomplishments. She fascinated him. It was said his affection was returned; but a good deal of mystery enveloped this transaction. The lady had many other admirers—one, a friend of mine, an old boon-companion, who loved her ardently, hopelessly, whose life would have been changed into paradise by her smiles—he had access to her, and once thought his passion was returned. He might have thought so; for the Lady Speranza loved to coquette, to raise hopes around her, and gather admirers at her feet. That is an accursed race of women; but she was of them, and adored, nevertheless. My friend was deceived, we may suppose, and confided to me his hopes and projects. We agreed together what was to be done.

The world knew nothing of all this. Every one talked of the widower who had forgotten so soon; of the lady who was to make him happy. It was carnival-time. The city was full of masks and music. One evening a strange rumour circulated. A pirate—a corsair—a smuggler—some said one, some said another—had committed an outrage on the Villa Salomone, where the Lady Speranza lived. The whole population crowded down to the port, where an English man-of-war schooner was preparing to go in pursuit. It soon got out of harbour, and went full sail down the coast, disappearing in the direction of Catania. Night came on; and next morning the schooner was again lying quietly at its moorings. All sorts of contradictory stories went about; but I knew the truth to my cost. I was on board that supposed pirate vessel—being deceived—for I think it was true that the lady loved the governor. We were closely chased, and in endeavouring to escape, ran on the rocks near Syracuse, just as you did this morning, only it was fine weather. I escaped to be taken prisoner; but my friend and the lady perished, as did several of the men who could not swim.

‘And it was on this account,’ inquired Walter, smiling in spite of himself at the bluntness of all this self-accusation, which could not be without an object, ‘that you were promoted to be the commandant of Maretimo?’

Signor Girolamo did not quite comprehend the irony; and went on to say that the governor, who was not an unjust man, on receiving his apologies and explanations, punished him only by exile to his present post. He swore, however, never to forget the base ingratitude of the man who had carried off and caused the death of Speranza; and that since he could have no further revenge upon him, would pursue him in his posterity; for he was a widower, and had left a son.

At this point of his narrative, the commandant paused. The idea in his mind, which he endeavoured carefully to conceal, was, that if he could persuade Walter to sound his praises in Sicily, for the hospitable reception he had afforded to him, ‘an illustrious Englishman,’ he might be admitted to some indulgence. Men of his stamp, who remain courtiers even in disgrace, are always ready to build their hopes on such foundations. In his eagerness to interest Walter, he said more than he usually thought expedient to Italian visitors.

‘My friend,’ said he, ‘whom I have not named, was the father of the Prisoner now under my charge.’

‘And is the son punished for the father’s crime?’ exclaimed Walter indignantly.

‘O no,’ was the hasty reply; ‘for we, too, have laws, Signor Inglese.’

The commandant seemed vexed to observe that his own complaints excited only civil interest, whilst everything that had reference to the Prisoner was eagerly received. It was on this account, perhaps, that he now intimated, partly by polite suggestions of the necessity of rest to the shipwrecked man, partly by one or two unequivocal yawns, that early hours were the rule on the island of Maretimo.

Walter was shewn to a room prepared for him by a man, the same before mentioned, who had acted as servant; and who seemed half a jailer, half a soldier. Indeed, it was rather a cell than a room; and on his observing so jocularly, he was told that there being no extra bed in the commandant’s peculiar apartments, they were obliged to put him into a chamber adapted to the residence of ‘one of the king’s enemies.’

‘We consult the comfort, however, even of the wicked,’ said the man with a sleek hypocritical look, as he moved the candle rather unnecessarily round the room, which was of extremely small dimensions, and allowed Walter to see that it was at anyrate clean and neat. A bedstead, with a picture of the Virgin and a crucifix at the head, a single chair, and a kind of table,

that might have been called a stool, formed the entire furniture.

‘I hope all your prisoners are as well off,’ observed Walter, still with an affectation of carelessness and jocularly.

‘We have but one besides yourself,’ replied the man, attempting to speak in the same spirit, and allowing a pale smile to flit across his features.

‘And where does my fellow-sufferer lodge?’ inquired the Englishman, preparing to undress.

The question, being too direct, obtained no answer save a grunt. The man put down the light on a table, wished Walter good-night, and went away, stealthily locking the door behind him. It was quite evident that every precaution was taken that seemed necessary to prevent the new-comer from holding any communication with the Prisoner.

The window of Walter’s room looked out over the moat upon the esplanade, where by the light of the moon, which occasionally threw its rays down between the clouds that were still hurrying across the sky, the solitary sentinel could be seen pacing to and fro. Far below, the sea, covered with what seemed to be snowy flakes—the crests of breaking waves—stretched away toward distant Favignana, on whose white rocky peaks the white light occasionally fell, making them look like a spectral fortress poised far up in the air. A hoarse roaring came from the beach below, where the waters were dashing; and the wind howled in fitful gusts round the towers of the prison, which it seemed at times to struggle with and attempt to carry away. There were no other sights or sounds; and Walter, feeling fatigue come over him, soon turned to his couch, and scarcely touched the pillow ere he fell asleep, and dreamed that he was again at sea, with wild waves tossing around, the tackle clattering, the ship creaking, and the captain’s voice shouting louder than the tempest.

When the man who had conducted Walter to his chamber had carefully locked him in, he went along a passage that led further into the interior of the prison-fortress, performing his nightly duty of trying all the doors, examining the windows, and seeing, in fact, that everything was well secured. Had any one been there to observe him, it would have been evident that he performed all these actions mechanically, and that his mind was occupied with unusual activity upon some subject deeply interesting to himself. He came to a well-fastened door, close by which was a stone seat. Here he sat down, and remained for a long time buried in thought. For more than twenty years had Carlo Mosca been employed in that place; and during the whole of that period he had never been suffered to leave the island. To all intents and purposes he was a prisoner, whose only consolation was that he could exercise petty tyranny over other prisoners. Many a time had his fidelity been tried. Magnificent promises had been made him by poor wretches shut up within these walls. But perhaps he had always doubted their ability of performance. At anyrate, Mosca had steadily refused to connive at any attempts at escape, though he listened to all offers, weighed well their terms, and sometimes unnecessarily excited hope. Yet he never resigned himself to the idea of remaining through long life in that dismal place. He had, as we all have, a certain dream of felicity in his mind—a sort of earthly paradise, to which he aspired more eagerly every year, in proportion as time hardened him and lessened his powers of enjoyment. At first, he would have been content with a little cottage, situated in some snug fold of the Apennines, within sight of Sienna, the place of his birth, from which he had been compelled to escape, when yet a lad, for some Italian crime—probably an unlucky blow with a knife. Here, with a pleasant wife, and an uninterrupted succession of children, he would mentally spend his time when released by night from

his jailer's duties; but even in this unreal state of existence, the innate desire of man to add little to little, to round off his possessions, to rise in the world, to aim at the infinite, manifested itself; and when Walter visited so unwillingly the island of Maretimo, Mosca had arrived at a state of mind in which he would have sold his services and betrayed his trust only to some imprisoned prince, who could promise wealth and honours as the price of liberty.

Still Mosca was disposed, as of yore, without relaxing an iota of his vigilance, to examine every offer; and he had often sat with the Prisoner, at whose door he had now paused, and listened to the promises which hope or imagination suggested, if he would only manage to convey a single letter to the mainland, as they called Sicily in that little island. He had even once accepted a sealed missive, and had kept it in his possession for months; but he had at last destroyed it, saying 'he dared not.' The fact was, he could see no prospect of reward, save some paltry sum of money, not the worth of the place he might sacrifice; and how, then, should he have an opportunity of selling himself to good advantage at a future period?

To look at him, with his chin in his hand, and his elbows on his raised knees, one would scarcely have believed in the extravagance of his desires. He was a pale, sickly, almost decrepit being, with a white night-cap on his head—very like a convalescent walking the garden of an hospital, and raising perfect unbelief in every spectator that he can ever return to real active life again. Mosca knew all about his personal appearance; but he imagined—and men like him in all walks of life always imagine—that once the bright gold for which he yearned in his possession, he could start again up into health and strength, perhaps back into youth—who knows? Those twenty years might prove but a long halt, not to be counted in the journey of life.

Mosca was thinking, calculating and comparing probabilities. He had not studied prisoners for nothing. He felt convinced that his charge—though influenced at first by disinterested humanity—had looked with hope on the young stranger whose life he had saved. He had not been present; and had learned of the incident only what he had gathered from the random observations of the soldiers. But he was quite sure that the Prisoner was awake, as he was—his mind occupied with similar thoughts. No idea of pity, however, came to him. He merely said to himself: 'This stranger is an Englishman. All Englishmen are rich. He feels an interest in his preserver. He may be generous. Is it worth while?'

After long agitating these questions in his mind, Carlo Mosca grew cold upon the matter. It seemed absurd to suppose that the Englishman—who might have lost all his fortune in the wreck—would be able to satisfy his ambitious desires. However, it would be as well to feel the ground a little, no matter what false hopes he excited. So he at length rose, cautiously opened the door of what was called the cell, but which was in reality a comfortable apartment; and was not surprised to see the Prisoner sitting at a table, with writing materials before him untouched, buried in profound thought.

His first words were: 'Have you carefully closed the window?' From which it might have been inferred that Mosca allowed the Prisoner to use a light only in secret. This, however, was not the case; for it was the policy of the commandant, and indeed is that of most Italian prisons, to allow those in immediate attendance on the inmates to seem to grant them some indulgences, in order to gain their confidence, and arrive at their secrets. Mosca, in this way, learned much of the private thoughts of those who came in succession under his care; but he never revealed anything. For from the first hour of his presence in that prison, he

had contemplated only one way of leaving it—namely, flight with some person sufficiently powerful and wealthy to reward him by a life of comfort.

The Prisoner, who was even paler than usual, fixed his large eyes on Mosca's countenance, endeavouring to discover the reason of his presence at that hour. Many a time, in the early period of his confinement, had he confided his hopes and projects to this man, and endeavoured, as we have said, to tempt him. Not perfectly understanding his character, he had mistaken the willingness he shewed to converse, and even to discuss the details of his escape, for good-natured sympathy. If he had ceased to discourse on such projects, it was because he believed that Mosca had the will but not the power to assist him; and now seeing the man come stealthily in, he could not help feeling hope begin to bubble up in his mind, like a desert spring that has long been choked by the sands.

'Do you bring me news of the stranger?' he said at length, having vainly waited for the other to speak.

Mosca sat down on a bench, and began to talk vaguely, to all appearance; but the Prisoner contrived to gather what he wanted to know—that the person he had preserved was an Englishman; that he was probably wealthy, and of distinguished rank; that he had been hospitably received by the commandant; and that he was now sleeping within the walls of the fortress.

'My friend,' said the Prisoner, rising and taking Mosca's cold hand, 'this is the hour for which we have long waited. That Englishman has become my friend. Our souls have communion without words. I must see him, and speak with him, however; and he will assist me to reward you.'

Even the sordid-minded jailer could not help feeling momentary respect for the strength of conviction which this speech shewed in human goodness and gratitude; but second thoughts suggested to him, that those who are in much want of kindness, and have no other dependence, believe in its existence from very despair. He smiled satirically and said: 'The Englishman is ready to thank you, but he is sleeping soundly, I am sure, and calculating how much economy will repair the breach which this wreck has made in his fortunes.'

The Prisoner was accustomed to hear Mosca express these cynical views of human nature, and was in nowise affected. He renewed his entreaties to be allowed speech with Walter. He knew, he said, that after dark no one visited the part of the castle placed under Mosca's surveillance. No danger of discovery could exist. He had no idea of escape, which would, indeed, be ridiculous. All he wanted was an hour's conversation, and 'good, kind Mosca would not refuse him that.'

Misfortune teaches man dissimulation. The quality was needed in this case, because now, for the first time, the Prisoner understood that Mosca was not his friend; that he might be a spy, or, at any rate, that he could be stimulated only by hope of a reward. He spoke a good deal, watching eagerly for a sign of emotion; but the jailer's mind was away in the country of his hopes, still calculating how much probable happiness would counterbalance the risk he should have to run. At length Mosca determined to grant the interview, but not with any serious belief that his ambition could by that means be satisfied.

Thus it was it happened that, after having slept only a few hours, Walter was awakened by a bright light being brought near his eyelids. He struggled with himself for some time ere he could recover complete consciousness, so heavy was the fatigue that weighed him down; but at length he succeeded in opening his eyes. The man with the sorrowful countenance, whom he had so longed to see again, even at a distance, was sitting by his bedside watching him. Two hands were outstretched simultaneously, and the

electric current of sympathy ran to and fro for some time without one word being uttered. Though their acquaintance had been so brief, they were already attached together by powerful bonds—by gratitude and compassion on one side, and on the other by hope, and that almost parental feeling which takes us towards those whose lives we have been the means of saving.

'We shall be allowed only a short time,' said the Prisoner, beginning the conversation; 'so that I shall at once explain my object in disturbing the rest of which you stand so much in need'—

'You are unfortunate,' interrupted Walter; 'and I may be of assistance to you. So far we understand each other. Let me hear your story; but be assured beforehand, that whatever I can do for you is already done in intention.'

The Prisoner, who understood the necessity of wasting no time in verbal professions, thanked him with a grateful smile, and began his narrative. It was his intention at first merely to state the heads, reserving detail for a better opportunity; but who can blame him, after a long period of confinement, during which all his dearest thoughts had been suppressed, if, now that he found a willing ear and a sympathising heart, he expatiated much on his past fortunes, and laid bare his wounds, that they might be healed by the tender touch of friendship? Walter listened with deep interest; for the incidents related, though common enough in substance all the world over, and quite characteristic of Italy, were sufficiently surprising to captivate his attention, even if they had been told under far less romantic circumstances.

OUR SIDE AND THE RUSSIAN SIDE.

We could, if we liked, write a long chapter about the means by which the government of Russia seeks to acquaint itself with what is doing in this country. We could give the name of that sedate-looking old man in black, who from time to time makes his appearance at meetings of our learned societies, always asking questions, and making notes in the most innocent way in the world, as though every one did not know him to be a spy, gathering information for his imperial master. We have seen young Muscovites sent over here to be apprenticed to some of our makers of machinery, not stout and robust as befits the wielders of sledge-hammers, but thin soft-handed youths, who had a habit of bribing the foreman to let them carry away working-drawings to study at their lodgings. We could tell of a Russian consul who used to attend Chartist meetings, dressed as a working-man in jacket and trousers of fustian, and who sent such intelligence to St Petersburg as alarmed the Grand Duke Michael, and made him defer his visit to London. We could do all this, and shew what curious under-currents there are in diplomacy, were it not that for the present a few remarks on trade must serve our purpose.

Some people have felt very uneasy because of the commercial losses in which, as they think, the present war is to involve us. A glance at both sides of the question, however, may assure them of tranquillity in this particular. We can easily select a few items for examination, from an account brought before the Statistical Society by Mr J. T. Danson, at one of their late meetings, and thus perhaps gratify a little natural curiosity.

We are apt to judge of a man in proportion to the number of acres he owns, or the amount of his balance at his banker's. What, then, shall we think of the czar, whose European dominions comprise 2,050,000 square miles? A large territory this; but that of the United States and our own in British North America is larger, each being about 2,500,000 square miles; so,

if mere extent of surface be a source of power, it is not all in the hands of the most unscrupulous. As regards population, the advantage is the other way. England—by which we mean the United Kingdom—and France put together, muster 65,000,000 of inhabitants; Russia has 67,000,000, including Poles and all the heterogeneous races over whom she exercises authority in Europe. This vast population is accessible at three points only—the Black, the White, and the Baltic Seas; the bulk live in the remote interior, beyond the reach of shot and shell, but not out of reach of the ukase which calls the peasantry into the army. These are mostly serfs, belonging to the emperor and the great landed proprietors; and reckoning their value at only half that of a Carolina 'nigger'—from 500 to 600 dollars—the drafting away of forty or fifty at a time must be no very agreeable event for their noble owners, who have to endure the loss as best they may. It is round Moscow—in that which was Russia 200 years ago—the population is most dense, being there from 56 to 121 to the square mile. Westmoreland, the least populous county in England, has 74 to the square mile; Lancashire, 944; and Middlesex, 5590.

Let us look now at the items of trade. We, here, with our population of 29,000,000, exported in 1853 more than L.98,000,000 worth of goods—about 70s. per head; France, with her 36,000,000 of inhabitants, sends away goods to the value of L.60,000,000 annually—about 33s. per head; while the exports of Russia amount to L.14,000,000 only—a poor 4s. 2d. per head! This sum, it must be remembered, represents raw produce almost exclusively, but what England and France send away is chiefly manufactures. The exports of the United States, with 23,000,000 inhabitants, amount to more than double those of Russia.

In 1847, Russia sent us L.7,363,681 worth of her produce; and what we sent her in return came to about half that amount, of which sum a little over a million would represent the value of the goods manufactured. According to the returns for 1853, it is L.1,228,404. Salt figures largely in our exports to Russia: in 1851, she took from us more than 2,000,000 bushels; and there is little doubt that it was British made salt with which so many of the prizes captured in the Baltic were laden. Salt is a precious commodity in the wide dreary regions of the czar; and its value is largely increased before it reaches the hut of the peasant. Coffee, too, sugar, spices, and our colonial produce, are needed for the populations of the towns and the tables of the nobles. Of sugar alone, we sent to Russia in 1847 more than L.1,300,000 worth. The distribution of the imports is not the same as in England and some other countries, where the poorest shares according to his means; for it is said that in Russia the nobles consume what is imported, while the peasants produce what is exported.

The tonnage of vessels trading in the imperial ports in 1848, was more than 3 British to 1 Russian, while of Russian ships entering British ports, the proportion is about 1 in 50; and where all the rest of the world buys to the value of L.100 from us, Russia takes 46s. worth.

As regards our dependence on Russia, from 1840 to 1853 we got 14 per cent. of all our imported grain from that country, of which 8 per cent. was from ports on the Black Sea. From 1840 to 1847, 72 per cent. of our whole supply of hemp came from Russia; but since then only 62 per cent., while our gross import of the article has nearly doubled, thus shewing that other sources have opened. Of flax and tallow, also, we now get more from other countries than from Russia; but we must still depend on her to a great extent for our brooms and brushes, seeing that she sends us nearly 2,500,000 pounds of bristles in a year, and the supply from other quarters is not yet adequate to the demand. Every year, however, multiplies the

number of pigs in Ohio and other American states, and soon there will be no lack of bristles. In fifty-three years, we have paid to Russia for flax and hemp alone more than £116,000,000 sterling: thus she will lose more by the quarrel than we, and pay pretty dear for imperial ambition. Looking at the war from whatever point of view, we may say with the humorist, 'We shall survive it.'

It will be curious and interesting to watch the changes that grow out of a state of hostilities. The trade resources of other countries will doubtless expand to meet the new demand on them, and on the restoration of peace, Russia may find herself shut out of the market. In the meantime, we see a great overland trade from St Petersburg, and other places, to Memel and the other Prussian ports on the Baltic. Great caravans of loaded wagons are continually passing and repassing along the roads; and so well is the system organised, that for this year at least the Russian merchants will get rid of their goods. But this cannot go on very long. Prussia will not be permitted to fatten on the European war; and after the reduction of the Crimea, active military operations will be changed into a blockade. The condition of affairs is certainly a new one to the present generation: War and Peace are both at work. Forts are being knocked down, and prisoners taken, and at the same time the busy trader still keeps up his gainful relations; and the post-office, without a single interruption, still carries our letters to St Petersburg. There are some two or three thousand English in that city, living in perfect composure so long as Cronstadt intimidates the fleets. What they will do afterwards, remains to be seen; at all events, they are not unwilling to enjoy themselves at present, if we may judge from a large case of novels and other light literature we saw shipped a few days ago for St Petersburg.

HINT TO BURGLARS.

A few nights ago, as one of our most distinguished authors, M. de Balzac, was lying awake in bed, he saw a man enter his room cautiously, and attempt to pick the lock of his writing-desk. The rogue was a little disconcerted at hearing a loud laugh from the occupant of the apartment, whom he supposed asleep. 'Why do you laugh, sir?' asked the thief. 'I am laughing, my good fellow,' said M. de Balzac, 'to think what pains you are taking, and what a risk you run, in hope of finding money by night in a desk where the lawful owner can never find any by day.'—*Paris paper.*

CLAUQUEURS OF PARIS.

The chief of the *claqueurs* is often allowed a voice in the preparation of a piece. He suggests the suppression of a long speech, or points out a position which he considers dangerous. One day it appeared to the chief of the *claqueurs* of the Opera, that Dérivis sang a certain song too slowly, and he intimated this opinion to the singer. 'Go to the devil!' Dérivis replied; 'do you think I don't know more about it than you?' 'Well, well,' said the chief presently to his band, 'not a hand to-night for Monsieur Dérivis.' Frédéric, who has had his laugh at everybody, laughed at his own expense at the last performance of *Robert Macaire*. At the moment when the curtain was falling, he advanced to the footlights, and addressing the gallery, said: 'I beg your pardon, gentlemen, haven't you seen Monsieur Auguste?' Astonishment silenced the house. 'Let me tell you why I inquire for Monsieur Auguste,' continued Frédéric; 'I paid him a hundred francs this morning for a first-class recall to-night. If he be not here now, he has robbed me. Therefore, friends, help me out of my difficulty.' Instantly, amid shouts of laughter, the *claqueurs* called out, 'Frédéric! Frédéric!' The curtain, which had fallen after Frédéric's speech, was drawn up again. The actor advanced seriously to make his acknowledgments, and retired amidst the applause of the entire audience.—*Paris in Little.*

EUDOXIA.

O SWEETEST my sister, my sister that sits in the sun,
Her lap full of jewels, and roses in showers on her hair;
Soft smiling, and counting her riches up, slow, one by one,
Cool-browed, shaking dew from her garlands, those
garlands so fair
Many gasp, climb, snatch, struggle, and die for—her
everyday wear!
O beauteous my sister, turn downwards those mild eyes of
thine!
They stab with their smiling, they blister and scorch
where they shine.

Young sister, who never yet sat for an hour in the cold,
Whose cool cheek scarce feels half the roses that throng
to caress,
Whose loose hands hold lightly these jewels and silver and
gold,
Think—think thou of those who for ever—for ever—on
press
In perils and watchings, and hunger and nakedness,
While thou sit'st serene in God's sunlight which He made to
shine;
Take heed. These have lifted their burden—now take
thou up thine.

Live meek, as besecms one whose cup to the brim is love-
crowned,
While others drop empty in dry dust—What, what
canst thou know
Of the wild human tide that rolls seething eternally round
The isle where thou sit'st fair and calm like a statue of
snow,
Anear which the beautiful angels continually go.—
Keep pitiful! Whose eyes once turned from the angels to
shine
Upon publicans, sinners? O sister, 'twill not pollute thine!

Who, even-eyed, looks on His children, the black and the
fair,
The loved and the unloved, the tempted, untempted?—
marks all,
And metes—not as man metes. If thou with weak tender
hand dare
To take up His balance and say where His justice should
fall—
Far better be Magdalen dead at the door of thy hall,
Dead, sinning, and loving, and contrite, and pardoned, to
shine
Midst God's saints in His heaven, than thou, angel-sister of
mine.

Nay, whitest thorn-blossom—white lily, more pure than the
snows—
White dove, flying skyward with not an earth-stain on
her wing,
I know thou wilt sit in Love's palace for ever, with brows
Bright-crowned, as one who sits calm by the throne of a
king,
All-worshipped, scarce envied, so meekly the purple
robes cling;
Oh, when in the King of kings palace we two meet, this
sign
Will witness—Thou, God, lovest equal!—Farewell, sister
mine.

'THREE ERAS OF OCEAN STREAM-NAVIGATION.'

In this article, in No. 37, the *Golden Age* is stated to have sailed 'direct for Chagres.' It is hardly necessary to say that this name should be 'Panama,' the mails being forwarded across the Isthmus to Chagres. An anonymous correspondent asserts that there are no French vessels plying between Havre and America, the *Humboldt* and the *Franklin*—which have been recently wrecked—having sailed under the American flag.

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